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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (02/03): Prime Minister Fayyad
gives remarks at conference in Israel

Main Stories:

-----The dailies front page news on Palestinian Authority (PA) Prime Minister Salam Fayyad attending the annual conference organized by the Strategic Studies Institute in Herzliya. Fayyad is quoted saying that Israel must begin to "roll back" its occupation of the Palestinian territories, starting with ending the incursions into the West Bank, to convince Palestinians it wants a peace deal that would give them statehood. PA official daily Al-Hayat Al-Jadida reports that Fayyad said that East Jerusalem is Palestinian land that was occupied in 1967 and must become the capital of Palestine.

Maan news agency reports on Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri condemning Fayyad's participation in the conference, saying "The Palestinian Authority's cooperation with Israel reached a political level, and this is a serious indicator that the PA has connected its projects with Israeli interests and policies."

The dailies report that PA President Mahmoud Abbas stated in a joint press conference with Spanish Foreign Minister Moratinos in Ramallah yesterday that the PA is still reviewing the proposals submitted by Special Envoy George Mitchell. Abbas reiterated that the Palestinians are committed to the peace process and the two state solution, and that the settlement activities must stop. In related news, Al-Hayat Al-Jadida reports that President Abbas will meet with Egyptian President Mubarak on Friday in Egypt to discuss the proposals submitted by Special Envoy Mitchell regarding the resumption of negotiations with Israel.

The dailies run reports citing "well informed" French sources saying that Special Envoy Mitchell asked French and European officials to exert pressure on President Abbas to accept the US proposal for the resumption of negotiations.

Al-Quds front pages news on the new UNRWA Commissioner General Filippo Grandi noting after a visit to Gaza yesterday that Israel bears huge responsibility for the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

BLOCK QUOTE:

Al-Quds runs an editorial under the title "Negotiations Are Not a Goal" which states that Palestinian-Israeli negotiations are not a goal, but a means to achieve peace in the region. The writer believes that the more pressure the United States exerts on the PA to resume negotiations, the more it loses its credibility. The author argues that in order to ensure the resumption of negotiations, the U.S. has to lay out a clear policy regarding settlement activities.

RUBINSTEIN